



MAP ♦ P.O. Box 128 ♦ 575 US 250 ♦ Savannah, OH 44874 ♦ (419) 962-1515 ♦ January 2014

The Fivefold Appeal to Be Justified By Faith Alone

Study 4: Galatians 5:1-6

—Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

<p>1. Stand firm because Christ has freed the believer</p> <p>2. Stand firm because the law is not God's way for man to be justified</p> <p>a. If you trust a ritual to save you, Christ is of no value</p> <p>b. If you trust a ritual to save you, you are obligated to keep the whole law</p> <p>c. If you seek to be justified by the law, Christ can have no effect upon you. You are</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 5</p> <p>D. Appeal Four: Stand Firm in the Liberty of Christ, 5:1-6</p> <p>Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.</p> <p>2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.</p> <p>3 For I testify again to every man</p>	<p>that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.</p> <p>4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.</p> <p>5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.</p> <p>6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.</p>	<p>cut off, fallen from grace</p> <p>3. Stand firm because the hope of righteousness is by faith</p> <p>a. Righteousness comes thru the Spirit</p> <p>b. Righteousness comes thru Jesus Christ alone—not by law</p> <p>c. Righteousness comes by faith expressed thru love</p>
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Section IV

THE FIVEFOLD APPEAL TO BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE Galatians 4:8-5:12

Study 4: APPEAL FOUR: STAND FIRM IN THE LIBERTY OF CHRIST

Text: Galatians 5:1-6

Aim: To stand firm and live victoriously in the liberty given by Christ.

Memory Verse: Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal 5:1).

INTRODUCTION:

It was the American patriot Patrick Henry who said “Give me liberty or give me death.” Henry knew what it was like to live under the thumb of a tyrant. Along the way, he had the good fortune to get a small taste of liberty. And once he tasted liberty, his taste buds

exploded with flavor. The bland taste of bondage would never satisfy him again.

In the same sense, the law serves as a tyrant. It shows no mercy and hates anything related to freedom. Anyone who weds himself to the law will be entangled in the chains of bondage. What is the alternative for the Christian believer? Liberty in Christ. But why and how? The purpose of this session is to answer those questions.

Straightforward and direct, a much needed appeal is given to backsliding churches and their people—stand firm in the liberty of Christ.

OUTLINE:

1. Stand firm because Christ has freed the believer (v.1).
 2. Stand firm because the law is not God's way for man to be justified (vv.2-4).
 3. Stand firm because the hope of righteousness is by faith (vv.5-6).
- 1. STAND FIRM BECAUSE CHRIST HAS FREED THE BELIEVER (v.1).**

Note two points:

1. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, he is freed from the law and its enslaving power. He no longer has to worry if he is good enough or if he has done enough good works or kept enough laws to be acceptable to God. Why? Because Christ has fulfilled the law for him. When Christ was on earth, He was sinless; He obeyed the law perfectly, never violating it a single time. Therefore, He secured the Ideal Righteousness and stood before God as the Perfect Man. But Christ did something else much more wonderful. It was not enough for the Ideal Righteousness to be secured for man. There was also the problem of the penalty of the law; once the law had been broken, the penalty had been enacted; it had to be paid. This is the glorious message of the cross—what the death of Jesus Christ is all about. Jesus Christ not only secured the ideal righteousness for us, He took the penalty for our trespassing upon Himself and bore it. Jesus Christ bore our judgment and punishment for having broken the law which was death.

If righteousness has been secured for us and if the punishment for our transgressions has been paid, then we stand before God perfect—absolutely righteous and free from transgression—and acceptable to Him. Does this mean everyone is accepted by God and covered by the life and death of Jesus Christ? No! And the reason is easily seen: not everyone accepts what Jesus Christ has done for him—not everyone believes in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has set us free; we do stand in liberty free from the bondage of sin and death wrought by the law—but only if we believe it. Naturally—it is as obvious as can be—if we do not believe and accept a gift freely given, then the Giver still possesses it. We do not receive the gift; therefore, we do not have it.

The point is this: Christ has freed the believer from the bondage of the law. Therefore, we must stand firm in the liberty He has provided for us.

2. The Galatians were about to become entangled again with the yoke of bondage. False teachers had arisen who were teaching that the basic work of Christ was to live as a great example and to bring us the great teachings of God. That is, they accepted Jesus Christ as the Son of God, but they did not accept the message of salvation by grace (the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ). They taught that Jesus Christ had not come to give us a new approach to God; He came to add new teachings to the law.

Therefore, a person was still to approach God. . .

- by undergoing the basic ritual of Jewish religion (circumcision, baptism, church membership, etc.).
- by committing himself to the law.
- by observing all the rituals and ceremonies of Jewish religion.

All of this of course sounds familiar to every generation, for if we simply omit the word *Jewish*, the three stipulations are seen to be

present in so many teachings, religions, and churches of society.

Again, the exhortation is that a person must not become entangled with approaching God by law or works, for no person can ever do enough good to become perfect before God. Our perfection and acceptance before God has already been secured for us—in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, we must stand firm in the liberty that Christ has given us. For the only person who will ever be acceptable to God is the person who stands before God free of sin and condemnation, a person who has been set free by God's very own Son.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro. 8:2-3).

ILLUSTRATION:

Christ has freed the Christian believer from the power of the law. With that truth stated, keep yourself free. In *Who Will Deliver Us?*, Paul F.M. Zahl writes:

A duck hunter was with a friend in the wide-open land of southeastern Georgia. Far away on the horizon he noticed a cloud of smoke. Soon he could hear cracking as the wind shifted. He realized the terrible truth: a brushfire was advancing, so fast they couldn't outrun it.

Rifling through his pockets, he soon found what he was looking for—a book of matches. He lit a small fire around the two of them. Soon they were standing in a circle of blackened earth, waiting for the fire to come.

They didn't have to wait long. They covered their mouths with handkerchiefs and braced themselves. The fire came near—and swept over them. But they were completely unhurt, untouched. Fire would not pass where fire had already passed.

The law is like a brushfire. I cannot escape it. But if I stand in the burned-over place, not a hair of my head will be singed. Christ's death is the burned-over place. There I huddle, hardly believing yet relieved. The law is powerful, yet powerless: Christ's death has disarmed it.

QUESTIONS:

1. What things could become potential entanglements of bondage to you? What protective barriers have you put in place in order to stay free?
2. What is Christ's relationship with the law?
3. Can rituals sometimes become yokes of bondage? What can you do to keep rituals from enslaving you, from becoming the focus of attention instead of Christ Himself?

2. STAND FIRM BECAUSE THE LAW IS NOT GOD'S WAY FOR A MAN TO BE JUSTIFIED (vv.2-4).

Three significant warnings are strongly issued.

1. If a person is ritualized, Christ shall profit him nothing. Ritualized means a person is depending upon some religious thing to make him acceptable to God. In the case of the Galatians, it was the ritual of circumcision; but it can apply to anything: ritual, ceremony, works, law, goodness, church membership, baptism, last rites, prayer, religious services, ministry, even religion itself. If a person approaches God and tries to secure God's acceptance by any means other than Christ, then Christ shall profit him nothing. This means that what Christ has done for man is of no benefit to the person. What Christ has done for man will have no effect upon the man whatsoever. The righteousness and death of Jesus Christ will be of no avail to the man, for the man is trusting his own works and goodness, not the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ.

2. If a person is ritualized, he has to do the whole law. Think for a moment: if a person trusts a ritual to save him, really depends upon a ritual to make him acceptable to God, then he had better keep the whole law. Why? Because he is accepting the law (works, religion) as the way to approach God. He is subjecting himself to ritual, walking the way of law in order to approach God. Therefore, he must continue to approach God by law. He must keep the whole law.

In a summary statement: if a person approaches God by ritual, any ritual, he assumes responsibility for doing the whole law.

3. If a person seeks to be justified by law, Christ can have no effect upon him—he is fallen from grace. What does this mean?

Remember: Paul is warning the Galatian believers by issuing a strong warning. False teachers were saying this: a person could be saved only by obeying the law and by doing as much good as possible. They were teaching that the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ was not what it took to approach God and to receive eternal life. They said more than Christ was needed: one's own righteousness and goodness, works and effort, were also needed.

Keep this in mind: we can readily see why Paul issued such a severe warning to the Galatian believers. They must not follow the false teachers, must not turn away from Christ and become apostates.

The point is this: not only the Galatians, but we also, must heed the warning lest we begin to deny Christ. To deny Christ, His righteousness and death, is bound to lead to the doom of the apostate. We must always remember: Paul himself said that he was to be accursed if he ever preached any other gospel than that of God's glorious love in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Eternal security is not the issue here, as it is so often made to be. The issue is God's own dear Son, His righteousness and death—His very life and work—His honor and Person. No person is living or ever will live who will be allowed to tamper with the righteousness and death of God's dear Son. We are fools to think so, even if we are trying to defend and explain a doctrinal position. This was certainly the thought and position of Paul when he said he was to be cursed if he became apostate.

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart

from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt. 7:22-23).

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro. 3:20).

ILLUSTRATION:

Accepting the grace of God at face-value is difficult for many Christians: “How can God be that good to us? What is the catch? Surely, we have to add something to what God has done to be saved.” J. Vernon McGee illustrates this point for us:

Years ago a tonic called Hadacol was advertised. I don't think it is sold any more. I am not sure of the details, but they found it was about seventy-five percent alcohol. A lot of people were using it. The company that made it was giving out glowing testimonials about its product.

Now suppose a testimonial read something like this: “I took 513 bottles of your medicine. Before I began using Hadacol, I could not walk. Now I am able to run. . . . I really have improved. But I think you ought to know that during that time I also concocted a bottle of my own medicine and used it also.”

Now, my friend, that final sentence certainly muddied the water. There is no way to tell if it was the 513 bottles of Hadacol that cured him or his own concoction. The minute you put something else into the formula, you are not sure.

Now notice carefully what Paul is saying. If you trust Christ plus something else you are not saved...How can He profit you anything when you have made up a bottle of your own concoction rather than trusting Him alone for your salvation?

3. STAND FIRM BECAUSE THE HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS BY FAITH (vv.5-6).

The hope of the believer is for righteousness. Hope does not mean the uncertainty of worldly hope, that the believer might—but then again he might not—secure righteousness before God. The believer's hope is in Jesus Christ, and it is as assured as God exists. Hope in the Bible means the focus, the concentration, the longing, the craving, the desire for righteousness—the privilege of being redeemed and spending eternity with God. Note the source of such an assurance and secured hope.

QUESTIONS:

1. What warnings does Paul issue in these verses? Why is it important for you to heed these warnings also?
2. What does it mean to “fall from grace”?
3. Can you remember a time when you fell from grace? How did you recover?
4. What practical things can you do to prevent a future fall from grace?

1. The hope for righteousness comes through the Spirit of God. It is the presence of the Spirit who dwells within the believer that stirs the hope. The Holy Spirit stirs hope and gives absolute assurance that God will take His faith and count it for righteousness.

2. The hope for righteousness comes through Jesus Christ alone, not by a ritual (circumcision, law) nor by the lack of a ritual. Note exactly what this is saying:

- ⇒ neither undergoing a ritual (circumcision) nor being without a ritual brings hope.
- ⇒ neither having and keeping the law nor being without law brings hope.
- ⇒ neither working for righteousness nor not working for righteousness brings hope.

Nothing, absolutely nothing, can provide the sure hope of righteousness within a person except Jesus Christ: His righteousness and His death alone can offer hope to man.

3. The hope for righteousness comes by faith wrought by love. It was God's love that sent His Son to secure our righteousness to die for us. When a person really sees this, it breaks him; and he bows and surrenders his own love, faith, life, and loyalty to Christ. The love of God stirs us to love Him and to believe Him. We love Him because He has loved us.

“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” (Ro. 8:24).

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the difference between faith and hope?
2. Upon what is your hope to be focused?

3. What difference does hope make in your Christian journey?
4. What did Paul mean when he said “faith . . . worketh by love”? Does your faith work like this? What adjustments do you need to make?

SUMMARY:

“Give me liberty or give me death.” These were the words of a great patriot. They are to be the words of a Christian believer also. We have been challenged to . . .

1. Stand firm because Christ has freed the believer.
2. Stand firm because the law is not God's way for man to be justified.
3. Stand firm because the hope of righteousness is by faith.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES

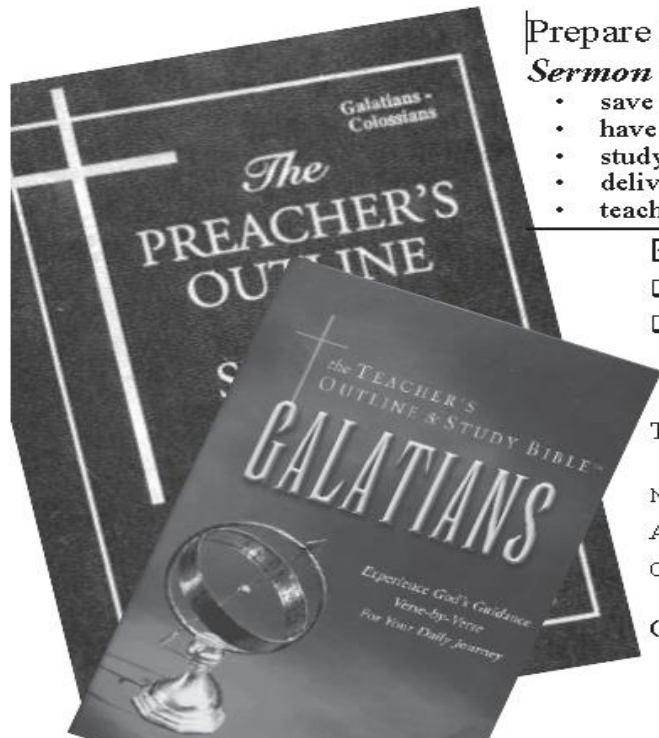
(Reflection & Response)

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

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It was a good thing that the Christmas carolers has bundled up snugly in their dark-colored hats, bonnets, boots, and gloves as the snow swished across the countryside. David had been going with the young people to bring goodies and cheer to shut-ins for a few years. He had always loved to sing Christmas hymns with his strong voice, but tonight was different. It wasn't that he didn't still experience the sheer joy of singing, but this time he was not only pushing out words by using his own vocal cords, but it seemed that a voice was calling to him from deep down inside as they sang.

“O come all ye faithful joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem. Come and behold Him, born the King of Angels. O, come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O, come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.” The carolers kept singing, “Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation; sing, all ye citizens of heaven above. . . .”

Strangely, David's attention was shifting from his own ability to sing, to the meaning of the words.

“How could I go to Bethlehem?”

“What is this that I am feeling?”

“I feel like someone is calling me, but who, to where, and for what?”

The questions all begged for answers and seemed to be amplified with the next carol.

“Joy to the World, The Lord is come, Let earth receive her King, Let every heart prepare Him room. . . .”

David had heard the Christmas story many times before, but to him it had been just time and events in history. As the carolers finished their presentation with, “We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year,” the evening turned into a blur of emotion. Finally, the youth paired off and headed for home. He was glad he hadn't asked to take a girl home. The words, the call, and the drawing of David's heart hardly rendered him capable of the usual jovial conversation.

When he got home and took care of the horse, his dad was still up reading The Budget. “How went the caroling?” he asked, not glancing up.

“It was okay,” David answered.

“What happened, did you get turned down for a date?”

“No, I didn't ask anyone out.”

“You seem somber; did your voice give out?”

“No, Dad. I don't know what came over me tonight. I'm going to bed.”

Christmas day was filled with family, extra chores, and guests, but David's heart wasn't in it. He couldn't shake the words of the song calling him, “O, come let us adore Him, O, come let us adore Him. . . .” He wanted to adore Jesus, but how?

Confused, David tried to pray from his heart rather than repeat the memorized prayers from the prayer book. As the new year approached, his attention was drawn to his New Testament on the dresser. With

inspiration, he picked up the Scripture in hopes of learning how to pray correctly.

As he read, he noted the wise men who come to worship the Christ child: “This is what the Christmas carol was talking about, but why do I feel like I need to be there?” David felt Christ was speaking directly to him from Matthew 11:28: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” In John 14:6 he read Christ's words, “I am the way the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by me.” Reading through Ephesians, he realized that only faith in God's grace could save him—and not his own works. The Scripture that sealed the deal for David was Revelation 22:17: “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. . . . Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

So strong was the call that David fell to his knees and prayed in faith, “Dear God, I do believe that Jesus is the sinless Son of God and that He died on the cross to cleanse me from all my unrighteousness. I ask that you will forgive me for trying to make it on my own. I accept you as my Savior and I ask that you will be my Lord. I thank you for being my way into the kingdom of God. Amen!”

On his knees, he realized that faith had led him to the fulfillment of the call and that this was the beginning of his adoration of Christ as Lord!

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Humility and Forgiveness

—Jakob Ammann



We, Jakob Ammann, Isaac Bachman, and Niklaus Augsburgur, confess that in this controversial matter and in the harsh ban which we have used against you in Switzerland we have grievously erred. For we were with each other on the 7th day of February 1700 and agreed among each other to remove the ban from you.

We confess that the ban also applies to us, and for this reason we do not stand apart from the church without guilt, and we desire

to be reconciled with God and man as much as is possible. Thus, we are asking you for forbearance, that you indeed would be willing to show us forbearance and to pray from your hearts to the Lord on our behalf that He might grant us all this through grace.

For because of our error it is a matter of heartfelt concern to us that we atone for our sins while we are still living and healthy. And therefore, we are asking you once again from our hearts for forbearance, for this did not happen intentionally on our part. I hope that you can believe us. Therefore, do have patience and grant us that which you are able to grant, and pray indeed to our loving God for us that He might indeed grant us all this through grace.

—From a letter written to the church congregations in Switzerland

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God has been working in my heart recently regarding relationships and respect. Did you know that we teach others how to treat us? Now, wait just

a minute, before we take this the wrong way. We can all think of ways we'd love to teach others how to treat us, but those ways would not be beneficial at all. In fact, the results are actually contrary to what we think they will be. This little principle operates using the Golden Rule. If someone has treated me disrespectfully, my natural, human response might be to withdraw (or even to give them a little of their own medicine), because it doesn't feel very safe to be around someone like that.

There are times when withdrawing a bit is a good thing, and healthy boundaries are good, but if we are dealing with a believer, we should give them the same benefit of the doubt that we would want them to give us. I want others to believe the best of me and to see my heart. (I have a compassionate heart; I hate pain, and feel horrible if I have hurt someone. I love to encourage.) I need to be willing to give others room and believe that they probably did not intend to hurt me. If they did intend to hurt me, I need to realize that they probably did so because of hurt in their own hearts.

To give an example, recently I felt extremely disrespected and hurt by someone. I have always been one to work out issues and not run from a situation, but this time I wanted to run and never, ever come back, because it hurt so badly. My natural reaction was to treat them the way they treated me. When I considered this principle (we teach others how to treat us), I thought, "I'll teach you how it feels to be treated the way you treated me!"

At first I hurt so badly I had to keep to myself for a while to find some healing. I ran to the Lord. He knows us and approves of us, and only He can work out these situations. I found safety and security with Him and the knowledge that He is okay with me. As time passed I kept giving the situation to Him. He began to show me some things that brought me a tiny bit of healing.

He also spoke to me about teaching others how to treat me, and that in this situation I was to treat with respect those who had disrespected me.

I realize this is a no-brainer; after all, the Golden Rule says, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you." The truth of the matter is, however, that when we are hurting, it is not easy to think clearly, and it can be very, very difficult to do the right thing. I felt I had many reasons to treat those who had hurt me the same way they had treated me, but God made it clear to me that this would do the exact opposite of what I wanted it to.

Chances are that someone might be smart enough to figure out how they treated me, but usually, we see things differently than others. We are right in our own eyes, and we are also blind to ourselves.

More likely than not, we would invite more of the same kind of behavior, which is not at all what we want. We ALL want to be treated with honor and respect. Treating those who dishonored and disrespected us with the honor and respect we desired can be very difficult and painful. But it actually can bring healing to your heart at the very moment you do it, and in the future, as God begins to bring healing to their heart and continued healing to your own. Yes, you heard me! Their hearts need healing as well. You see, the only way we ever get true justice is if the offender finds the healing and wholeness for which Jesus paid the price.

So, if we pray for those who have hurt us to find healing and to become whole, we will also find our own healing and justice. If this seems rather elementary to you, go back in your mind to a situation where you were badly hurt. In those times, God needs to break down obvious truth in ways that our broken hearts can receive. This is how He did it for me. Is my heart completely healed of this situation, and has it been resolved? Not by a long shot. But I am confident that it will be, because He who began a good work is faithful to complete it.

—Love, Lynn Miller

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Holy Spirit, continued from back cover

commands us to listen to His voice, as He is constantly speaking to those who are willing to listen.

Consider the following instances in scripture when the Holy Spirit shows up and speaks:

Then the *Spirit said unto Philip*, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot (Acts 8:29).

As they (the church) ministered to the Lord, and fasted, *the Holy Spirit said*, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, *being sent forth by the Holy Spirit*. . . (Acts 13:2-4).

...take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: *for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit* (Mark 13:11).

5. The Holy Spirit took over where Jesus left off.

Two thousand years ago, God the Father sent His only Son into the world. He came to our planet and put on flesh and human form, and for thirty-three years, God's Son, Jesus, walked and talked as a human. He experienced hurt and even hungered as a human. At age thirty, He went into full-time ministry. People began to follow Him and listen to His teachings. Many of His followers thought Jesus was the one who would deliver them from the Roman government and be their next king. What a surprise, when Jesus said in John 14:28:

"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away. . . because I said, I go unto the Father. . . ." (John 14:28).

Jesus' disciples were absolutely dumbfounded. In a moment, their whole world turned upside down. They had given up everything and followed Jesus. He had taught them for three years. They knew no other master. They struggled so much that Peter said he would give his life for Him. Thomas asked Jesus to let them go with Him.

I share all this to bring you to John 16, verses 6 and 7. Here Jesus makes a powerful statement. The first time I understood these verses, it caused me to sit straight up in my chair and read it over and over. Jesus said:

"Because I have said these things unto

you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; *it is expedient for you (meaning: to your advantage or own gain) that I go away*: for if I go not away, *the Comforter (Holy Spirit) will not come unto you*; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.

Jesus is telling these men: "Hey, it is highly important that I leave, because as soon as I leave, I'll send you another person to walk with you just like I did—the Holy Spirit; He will move inside of you and live there."

Jesus was human and could only be at one place at a time; however, the Spirit could be everywhere at the same time. The truth of the matter is, as long as Jesus was on earth, the Spirit was blocked from coming. As we will see further into our study, when the Spirit finally did arrive on earth, more happened in a few hours than happened in all of Jesus' three years of ministry. Yes! It was to our advantage and gain that Jesus would leave, so the Holy Spirit could come and take over where Jesus left off.

Today, the Son sits on the right hand of the Father in heaven, but the Holy Spirit lives in the heart of God's children here on earth.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE NEW BIRTH

The Holy Spirit moves into a person's body the moment he experiences the new birth. That's really what the new birth is all about. When the Apostle Paul was writing to the church at Rome, he said:

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, *if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you*. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9).

What is meant by the new birth, and at what stage is it experienced?

1. First, there has to be conviction.

What is conviction, and what is the role of the Holy Spirit in this process? Conviction is what happens when a person begins to realize that he is guilty of sin and is in need of salvation. Consider what happened in the early church when Peter told the people that what they had done to Jesus was against the heart of God.

"Now when they heard this, *they were pricked (convicted) in their heart*, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the



Illustration by Lydia

apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do (Acts 2:37)?"

Being convicted of our sin against God is the first step toward experiencing the new birth and receiving the Holy Spirit.

2. Born of the Spirit

The new birth is a hundred percent spiritual experience; it is the Spirit of God regenerating (restoring) the spirit of man to perfection. When the inner spirit of man is born, his sin-stained, lifeless, hell-bound, and fallen nature is transformed and is covered with God's righteousness.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be *born of water* (first birth—flesh) and *of the Spirit* (second birth—spiritual), he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:3-6).

Being born again, not of corruptible seed (man-made laws), but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lieth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:23).

Just as we can't give physical birth to ourselves, we cannot give spiritual birth to ourselves or others. The second birth is fully a work and gift from God.

"Which were born, *not of blood, nor of*

Continued—next page

Holy Spirit, continued

the will of the flesh, *nor* of the will of man, *but of God* (John 1:13).

Because God is the One who gives our inner man (spirit) new birth, we can have assurance of where we stand with Him. That's why Christianity is so exciting. We don't have to struggle for our salvation, wondering whether we have said enough prayers or done enough good works in life. God did it for us, and it is complete. All we have to do is accept the payment that Jesus made for our sin when He died on the cross; the very moment you and I do that, God places His righteousness (perfection and holiness) on us. From that point on, whenever God looks at you and me, He will see His righteousness and not ours.

For He (God) hath made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Why is the spiritual birth experience necessary?

3. The New Man

The moment you and I are born again, the Bible says we immediately experience change within.

(God) Who hath *delivered us* from the power of darkness, and hath *translated us* into the kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13).

Therefore if any man be in Christ, *he is a new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, *all things are become new* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

With our new nature comes an intense desire and longing for Jesus Christ and the things of God. For the first time, we can fully appreciate Jesus' statement:

Jesus saith unto him, I am *the way, the truth, and the life*: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6).

Jesus is the only doorway into heaven: not the church, not the culture we were born into, not the clothes we wear or type of transportation we use. Not even baptism is a required for salvation and entrance into heaven. If it were,



Jesus would not have said to the thief on the cross, "Today you will be with me in Paradise (Luke 23:43)."

The moment we are born again, we know with all our being that Jesus is the truth we have been seeking all along. The more we get of Him, the more we want of Him. Our desire for Him feels right. It feels natural. As we pursue an intimate and living relationship with Jesus, we experience a love unlike any other.

As Christians, our outer man (the flesh) still sins and wars against the inner man (the new-born spirit)—please read Romans 7:18-25.

With our new life, we develop new desires. We want to please God out of love and not out of fear. As members of his family, we want to fit in with our Heavenly Father and our Brother Jesus.

When we become a new person in Christ, we also leave behind that choking burden of trying to earn our way to God and heaven. We finally grasp what Jesus has done for us and accept the fact that He did all that God required for the sin of mankind.

And ye shall *know* the truth, and *the truth shall make you free* (John 8:32).

We must and will appreciate the change that the new birth brings. Whoever you were before your new birth experience, you no longer are that same person.

Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we *know* that, when He shall appear, we *shall* be like Him; for we *shall* see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

A believer has a totally different lifestyle than the world offers. Those who have never experienced the new birth have only one nature—the flesh nature. These people make decisions and choices based on their own flesh and desires. However, those who have experienced the new birth have two natures—flesh and Spirit. These people wake up in the morning and have to choose which nature they want to walk in. If they chose to walk in the flesh nature, they will often appear to others as ones who have never been born again. If they chose to walk in the Spirit, they will appear as ones who have experienced the new birth.

One of the greatest downfalls of Christians is the failure to understand the great importance of living life in the Spirit.

The Bible says: Now that you have been spiritually born, walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16-25).

There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Romans 8:1).



Illustration by Lydia

The central quality of life in the spirit is walking in the Spirit. This involves a decisive effort to make the fruit of the Spirit evident in our lifestyle.

How does the fruit of the Spirit come into operation? Grab hold of who you are in Christ. Understand that you are a *spirit* who has a *soul* and lives in a

body. The Bible says that we are children of God, meaning that you have an everlasting Father who cares for you. He is on your side and is cheering you on in righteous living.

Have you ever talked to someone who controlled the conversation and never let you say one word? This is what it's like when we pray "at" God and do not take time to listen to Him. Think of prayer as sitting next to Jesus on the couch; spend as much time listening as you do talking.

Walking in the Spirit means walking in harmony with God and others. Guard your heart and tongue from bickering, bitterness, and conflict. Learn to rest in Him, and He will fight your battles. You need only to be still.

You must discover your weaknesses, because the enemy knows them better than you do. Understanding your weaknesses and yielding them to the Holy Spirit will strengthen you and help you discern and avoid temptations and pressures. To the Christian, Paul writes:

This I say then, *Walk in the Spirit*, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would (Galatians 5:16-17).

The Bible says we are led by the Spirit.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (family) of God (Romans 8:14).

Continued—next page

Holy Spirit, continued

The believer is expected to live his life constantly under the power and leading of the Holy Spirit. The believer must also understand the mindset of one who walks in the Spirit and know how to be led by the Spirit of God. Look around you and find someone who is led by the Spirit. Learn from him or her. Ask questions. Seek God for understanding. Learn to wait on the Spirit for direction and wisdom. He wants to lead you.

But they that *wait upon the LORD* shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint (Isaiah 40:31).

How often do you wait to hear from Him before you act?

The Bible says we are to grow in spiritual things. See 1 Cor. 2:6-3:3. Before you can begin to grow, you have to be born (in the Spirit). If you have never asked the Lord Jesus to save you from your sin and give you everlasting life, if you have never asked the Lord to put the Holy Spirit in you, if you have never accepted what Jesus did on the cross for you was enough—you cannot add anything—then you are still dead and lost. The new birth happens in a moment. It happens when you give up trying to get to God on your own, and you let God do it for you. Just give it up, friend! Give it up. It's freeing and beyond anything you have ever experienced in your life. Let God do the work. He already has, whether you have accepted it or not.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His (God's) mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5).

The new birth is the beginning of a process; the Christian goes through several stages and learns many things on the way. He is supposed to go all out for God by ensuring that he maintains life in the Spirit.

Are you conscious of the role of the Spirit in your day-to-day life? Jesus says to you:

And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter (Holy Spirit), that He may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye

know Him; for *He dwelleth with you*, and *shall be in you* (John 14:16-17).

Verse 26: But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, *He shall teach you all things*, and *bring all things to your remembrance*, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Jesus promised that when the Holy Spirit comes he will lead you and me into all truths and remind us what Jesus has taught us in the Bible. This is an ongoing process.

THE INFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is *come upon you*: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Just like batteries in a flashlight, the Holy Spirit will empower us to shine brightly in our hometown, home state and all over the world. Are you a flashlight...

- ◆ Without batteries?
- ◆ With batteries that have grown dim?
- ◆ With batteries that are fully lit up?

Jesus is clear; His followers will be witnesses of the cross, meaning they are ones who shine forth the light in a dark and lost world.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all *filled with the Holy Ghost*, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul...with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all (Acts 4:31-33).

Many people in churches today have given up the thought that anything like this could ever happen in their church, let alone in their generation. Really?! Maybe that is the very reason it's not happening. We do not believe!

Here is what I believe:

1. The Holy Spirit has not changed.
2. His passion to reach the world for Jesus Christ has not changed.

Maybe we are the ones who changed!

My honest belief is that churches in America have tried to do church without the Holy Spirit. In fact, few of us even know much about the Holy Spirit. Hardly anybody mentions His name in sermon or conversation. He's looked at as one who worked in lives 2,000 years ago, but not today. We fear that if we get too spiritually minded, someone will notice and avoid us, or worse yet, talk behind our backs.

In 1 Corinthians 12, we are told by the Apostle Paul that the Holy Spirit distributes His gifts to members of His family, such as He feels necessary.

Men and women of God, it is time to evaluate where we stand with God! Soon we will stand face to face with Him. What lame excuse are we going to bring to the table? Do we even care that we have bottled the Holy Spirit up and held Him back? Oh God, please forgive us and help us let go of our pride and selfishness and help us get real today!

For to one is *given by the Spirit* the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will (1 Corinthians 12:8-11).

What would a working, breathing, living church look like with all of these gifts in operation? The answer that comes to mind is POWER! Not our power, but Holy Spirit Power. Power that overcomes! Power that changes the world! If this Holy Spirit power is only available in believers, and believers bottle Him up and don't let Him out, what is that going to do for our generation?

Other Ministry Gifts in the Church
Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11-14:
And He (God) gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers;

Other Ministry Gifts in the Church

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11-14:

And He (God) gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers;

Why?

For the perfecting of the saints, for the

Continued—next page

work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Why?

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Why?

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive (Ephesians 4:11-14).

First, the Holy Spirit gives you a specific gift; He equips you for what He is calling you to do. Once He has placed His gift in you, He calls you to do something in the body of Christ. Do you know what your gift is? Are you obeying your call? Can it be said of you what Jesus said about the centurion?

When Jesus heard these things, He marvelled at him (the Gentile centurion), and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I

have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel (Luke 7:9).

Who are you following? Another man? A man-made religion? A culture? Your parents? A certain church flavor? Or are you a sold-out follower of Jesus Christ? Are you willing to have your life changed to reflect God's agenda for you, or do you expect God to fit into your agenda? Today, you and I fit one of the following types of followers:

1. The rich young ruler who was not willing to give up all and follow

Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto Him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich (Luke 18:22-23).

2. Peter who gave up all and followed immediately. Then Peter said, "Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee" (Luke 18:28)."

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND YOU

The Holy Spirit in prayer

Praying always with all prayer and supplication *in the Spirit*, and watching

thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (Ephesians 6:18).

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, *praying in the Holy Ghost*... (Jude 20).

I know this will be a hard pill for some to swallow, but praying in the Spirit is not reading someone else's words from a book, even though the words might be powerful and were from the writer's heart. They are not mine or yours. Real prayer in the Spirit is getting with God and speaking from your heart and from the deepest parts of your soul.

CONCLUSION

We can never enjoy the fullness of what God has ordained for us as Christians without the help and power of the Holy Spirit. My utmost hope and desire is that this study has excited your interest in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Truly, one study is far from sufficient to give a full and detailed description of the ministry and person of the Holy Spirit. Do not stop here. Dig deep into the Scriptures to learn all there is to learn about the blessed Holy Spirit.

Joe Keim

PO Box 128, Savannah OH 44874
(419) 962-1515

Love

—Marvin Hershberger



We all have our own ideas of what we think love is. The apostle Paul writes this on the expression of love:

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things (I Corinthians 13:4-7).

If we focus on this expression of love, we will overcome hate and condemnation toward others and ourselves. It is written that God is Spirit and also that God is love. Jesus became that expression of love as an example for us. He taught us to love others the way we want to be loved and treated. This is how others will know if we are His disciples: by observing how we love and treat others. I recently read this: "A rose offers her fragrance to Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and Atheist alike. It does not stop its perfume because of what one group

believes, even if that rose is crushed underfoot." We are to become that expression of love to others. Jesus taught us to love our enemies and to do good to those who hate us. If we do not agree on beliefs or interpretations of the Bible, that should not become a wall or division between us. Instead, we should love others and treat them with respect for who they are.

We cannot change the beliefs of others, even if we think we are right. Thoughts of condemnation and judgment will only put up walls of discrimination and ill feelings towards others. Our expressions of love and kindness will speak for themselves. Is it fear that separates? Perfect love casts out fear.

Paul taught that in Christ "we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (Acts 17:28-29). Can we grasp this? This is awesome! We are the offspring of God, who is love! This is our DNA. We are loved and

accepted unconditionally by the One who is love. If we abide in that reality, knowledge and fruit will take care of itself. Remember, if you pass by an orange grove, you don't hear the trees straining to push out lovely oranges. They simply are what they were created to be. What were we created to be? We were created to be the expression of the love of God in the earth.

Are we constantly having ill thoughts of others, or are we having kind and loving thoughts of others? A smile or a simple acknowledgement may make a difference in someone's life. We don't know when a small act of kindness from someone else may make a difference in our lives. How we think about and treat others is a seed that will eventually become a harvest in our lives and the lives of others.

I am not writing this because I am trying to teach you what I already do. I write this because I, too, desire to follow this advice from the Scripture. May I encourage others to join me in living this life of love in God? To become a success, we need to help others succeed. Peace and blessing to all.

— Marvin Hershberger

The Dream God Gave Me

Last night I had a dream...and It made such an impression on me that if you don't mind, I'll just share it with you.

The Dream God Gave Me

It was time for the returning of Jesus...The Father was sitting on His throne. There were lots and lots of people sitting in the room. Then it was time for everyone to get in line and receive the Judgment from the Father. The line was endless! There were people I knew and lots of people I didn't know. At first I was surprised to see so many people were happy (they were saved.) but then the stream of lost souls (crying and angry) started pouring out of the building. It was a steady stream...double line...it was so sad! The ones left still standing...waiting in line... had to push their way thru the steady stream of lost souls.

Everyone was carrying something with them, it was to give to the Father to show their identity. Just as my turn was getting closer, someone rudely grabbed (my something) out of my hands. It was my Bible! It got rudely jostled around, but then it came back to me...so I thought: it was just the case, an empty case with some old crumbs and beads left in the case from the Bible not being removed from the case for so long. Then I came before the Father, handed Him the case, and fell to my knees and sang a song about the Blood of Jesus. As I sang, the tears ran down my face. Then to my surprise the Father didn't even look at the empty case I gave Him. He set it on the bench behind Him and listened to me sing. Then He kindly and gently handed me the case and signaled for me to sit down with the Saints.

There were only a few people I knew, and the one I knew and chose to sit beside, was my Mom! She, too, was seated with the Saints! The high point that stands out to me in this dream is The Power in the Blood of Jesus! It is our righteousness, the only identity the Father is looking for...all our Holy religious things we do are totally pointless and meaningless to the Father, if we are only doing them for a better standing with God, trying to get a deeper relationship with God. Our righteousness is as filthy rags, it's only when He sees The Blood of His Son, that He will pass over us.

—An Amish sister in the Lord



1

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- 5) Amish Voice articles from the November issue

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2

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February 02, 2014

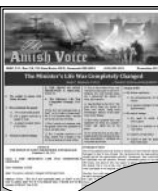
William Sitzai, counselor referred by Bruce Lengeman, will plan to discuss healing and how men especially can be free from sexual addictions.

March 02, 2014

Discuss articles that appeared in the January issue of the Amish Voice. Don't forget to bring your publication to the phone with you and follow along as we read and discuss.

You are invited to join our conference line every first Sunday of each month at 8pm EST as we discuss topics that pertain to the Amish Voice, family, marriage and other struggles we face in life.

Important Note: Because of the background noise we have experienced when people call in, all callers will be muted except for a panel of people who have been invited to come on as guests. This means you can listen in, but not add to the conversation unless you click 5*. **When you click 5*, our host, Paul Miller, will get a pop-up on his screen saying you have a question or comment.**



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Experiencing the Holy Spirit

—By Joe Keim

The goal of this study is to help us get a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit. In fact, it is my passionate prayer that you and I will get to know the Holy Spirit so well that we fall head over heels in love with Him and experience Him in ways we have never dreamed possible.

As church goes and claimers of the Christian faith, I'm sure we have heard of the Holy Spirit. But how many of us can really claim to *know* the Holy Spirit? Even if we claim to know Him, how many of us are *experiencing* Him in our day to day lives? Is the Holy Spirit real to you? Have you ever sat and talked with Him like you might talk to a spouse or very dear friend? Does He speak to you?

Sadly, many who walk the earth and claim to be part of God's family know little to nothing about the Holy Spirit. To many, He may seem like someone who is way out there: a ghost, untouchable, hard to understand, maybe even a mystery.

The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. His work is very noticeable and obvious throughout the Bible. In fact, it is quite clear that He is the One who inspired men like you and me to write the Holy Scriptures. 2 Peter 1:20-21 says:

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by

the will of man: *but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*”



Illustration by Lydia

Peter is making it clear that no part of the Bible ever came from the prophet's own understanding or human viewpoint. Every single Bible writer—Peter, Jude, Paul, John, Mathew, Jeremiah, Moses, King David and Isaiah—*was moved by the Holy Spirit*. As God through the Holy Spirit spoke to them, these men wrote it down. So the truth is, when you and I read the Bible in a language we can understand, we are reading the very words of the Holy Spirit.

Appreciating the place of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian is very important! That is, if you want to grow in your knowledge and understanding of Him. Only the Holy Spirit can grant such knowledge to man.

In this study we will seek to improve on whatever knowledge we may have of the Holy Spirit. For those who are unfamiliar

with Him, let me introduce you to a whole new world of spiritual reality.

THE HOLY SPIRIT, THIRD PERSON IN THE GODHEAD

1. **The Holy Spirit was present and active during creation**—see Genesis 1:1-3.

If you go to the very beginning of the Bible and start reading in Genesis, you will find that by the time you get to the second verse, the Holy Spirit shows up as being present and active in the work of creation. The truth is, He played a very important part in all of creation.

2. **The Holy Spirit has feelings.**

Quench not the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19).

3. **The Holy Spirit can be grieved or made sad.**

“And *grieve not* the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).”

4. **The Holy Spirit speaks.**

At times I have heard well-meaning people refer to the Holy Spirit as an “it,” as if He were an object or thing rather than a Person. The truth is, the Holy Spirit is a Person and should be referred to as He and Him. When we read the Bible, it is quite clear that He, the Holy Spirit, is able to speak like a human being. When He speaks, the Bible

Continued—Page 7